

## Eastern Kentucky University Encompass

---

Belles Lettres

Literary Magazines

---

5-1-1939

# Belles Lettres, 1939

Eastern Kentucky University, The Canterbury Club

Follow this and additional works at: [http://encompass.eku.edu/upubs\\_belleslettres](http://encompass.eku.edu/upubs_belleslettres)

---

### Recommended Citation

Eastern Kentucky University, The Canterbury Club, "Belles Lettres, 1939" (1939). *Belles Lettres*. Paper 5.  
[http://encompass.eku.edu/upubs\\_belleslettres/5](http://encompass.eku.edu/upubs_belleslettres/5)

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the Literary Magazines at Encompass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Belles Lettres by an authorized administrator of Encompass. For more information, please contact [Linda.Sizemore@eku.edu](mailto:Linda.Sizemore@eku.edu).

# Belles Lettres



1939

# Belles Lettres

An annual anthology of student writing sponsored and published by the  
Canterbury Club of Eastern Kentucky State Teachers College

At Richmond, Kentucky

Lucile Nunnelly, Editor

Dorothy White, Assistant Editor    Leonard Stafford, Business Manager  
Roy B. Clark, Ph. D., Faculty Sponsor

---

VOLUME FIVE

NINETEEN THIRTY-NINE

---

## Contents

Recompense .....	<i>Ruth Catlett</i> .....	3
The Lily Pond .....	<i>Dorothy Bracht</i> .....	4
Reflections .....	<i>Dorothy Bracht</i> .....	4
Sunrise .....	<i>Mary Matt Taylor</i> ...	4
Fair Exchange .....	<i>Clayton Lucas</i> .....	5
The Dandelion .....	<i>Leona Dishon Douglas</i> 7	
To Kathleen .....	<i>Johnny B. Center</i> ...	8
Afterglow .....	<i>Lucile Nunnelly</i> ....	8
Two Sonnets .....	<i>George Evans</i> .....	9
Heart Cleaning .....	<i>Genevieve Parris</i> ....	9
Wild Ducks .....	<i>Johnny B. Center</i> ...	10
I Am the Wind .....	<i>Glyn W. Davis</i> .....	10
Here is a Working Man .....	<i>Burgin Benton</i> .....	11
The Fightin' Irish .....	<i>Dorothy White</i> .....	11
Oh Critic, Hold Your Acid Tongue	<i>George Evans</i> .....	13
Moments of Dawn .....	<i>Clyde Lewis</i> .....	13
The White Shirt .....	<i>Viradena Floyd</i> .....	14
The Corpse On the Bed .....	<i>Clyde Lewis</i> .....	17
He Was Too Old .....	<i>Victoria Yates</i> .....	23
There's Something About a Garden	<i>Willa Bailey</i> .....	25
Passing .....	<i>Johnny B. Center</i> ...	27
Song of Sadness .....	<i>Glyn W. Davis</i> .....	28
Night Down Home .....	<i>Lucile Nunnelly</i> ....	28

## FOREWORD

The Canterbury Club of Eastern State Teachers College sponsors a magazine devoted to student writing each year. This magazine is called BELLES LETTRES. Having striven to maintain the high standards of BELLES LETTRES, we, the editors, present Volume Five with the sincere wish that the public will receive it favorably.

## RECOMPENSE

by Ruth Catlett

I am sending my son to war.  
So that the woman who runs the grocery on the corner  
Will not sneer from the corner of her loose mouth  
At my lack of patriotism.

So that he will never hate me for making him stay at home  
To submit the bloom of his glorious young pride  
To the burning disgrace of the draft.  
So that his father will not be ashamed of his son and me  
In his unmarked grave in some war-shattered land  
Where the last war laid him forever.

So that I can join the town women's club and sew bandages  
And gossip over men in the regiment  
With a vigor that shames mother love.

So that in days to come I can exhibit a bright gold star  
Over a heart that is stabbed with dull agony  
Which the world cannot see for the glow.

So that I may spend my nights staring up at God's wide  
    heaven,  
Living a life that has no part but a past,  
And dying a late death every night.

So that the young girl with the bright eyes whom he hoped  
    to marry  
Will live out her aimless life a hollow shell  
To save me from utter loneliness.

So that red geraniums in the window will never bloom  
Without bringing to me the slow, sickening smell  
Of blood and death. Yea, for these few things  
I am sending my son to war.

## THE LILY POND

by Dorothy Bracht

I looked into the lily pond,  
And as I looked, I saw a face—  
A face, to me, that seemed to say,  
"Why do you sit and look at me  
And ponder who I am?  
For don't you know 'tis only fools  
Who sit and sigh, and wonder why?  
And don't you know that while you sit  
This life will pass you by—?"  
And as the faces talked on to me,  
A tear drop from my eye did fall  
Upon the face within the pond  
And all was circled into the dim beyond.

---

## REFLECTIONS

by Dorothy Bracht

And then I think  
    would it not be better to be a simple  
    idiot!  
Oh, just to close the mind on all un-  
happiness.  
To laugh, meaninglessly, as a child  
    laughs  
    at a brightly colored flower.  
To go through these motions of living  
    not hiding behind a mask of blackness  
To be as one shunned and mocked, who  
    laughs, but knows it not.

---

## SUNRISE

by Mary Matt Taylor

Toward the west a thin white crescent  
Still rocks the silent slumbering earth,  
While in the east behind mountains gray  
Climbs the sun eager to impart  
His share of loveliness to the new-born day.  
On the rolling horizon in an early summer breeze  
Sway rows of slender poplars—  
Tall, stately, lord-like trees.  
And as I gaze and wonder,  
Lo, the clouds break asunder,  
And the sun of vermilion hue  
Peeps over mountain crests of blue,  
Splashing clouds with moulten red  
And lining them with silver too.

## FAIR EXCHANGE

by Clayton Lucas

Once on the outside of the State Bank and Trust Company the calmness that Lawson had assumed for the last two long days, since he heard of the Examiner's expected visit, vanished. His pulses hammered, his thin, weak hands were trembling violently, causing him to drop one glove after another as he tried to pull them on. The musical tinkle of the fountain in the public square was rapidly turning to a disappointed gurgle in the raw January wind. Great beads of perspiration stood out on his brow in spite of the sub-freezing temperature.

"Oh, God." A sob rolled up in his throat at the sight of a young man and his girl, arms interlocked, bending to the wind. A happy place for some, but zero inside and out for Lawson.

This is the end—the end! The thought raced through his agonized brain. Unconsciously he began to run over the events leading up to his present state of mind—a lowly bank teller on fifteen hundred a year trying to live like the president, and at the same time trying to get enough ahead to marry the pretty little waitress who served him coffee and witty repartee at the Beauregard where he lived.

He had lost five hundred dollars on a "sure thing" at the races—another even greater loss at Ricardo's roulette table in an unwise and futile attempt to regain his former loss, the steady downward drift with lady luck always smiling in the wrong direction.. Now the chance to replace the money he had taken from his cash drawer was gone. After tomorrow they would know. Lawson tried not to think of it longer.

Along with his painful reminiscence there had crept in another thought, not a comforting one, but at least a way out. He stopped walking to light a cigarette, marveling at the steadiness of his hands. He lifted his glove in a signal to a cruising taxicab, and the driver promptly pulled over to the curb.

"To Johnson's Pier," he ordered with a ring of purpose in his voice. The driver glanced at Lawson's face in the rear vision mirror as if in suspicion, but answered, "O. K., Buddy," as he shifted into gear.

As the cab got under way, Lawson relaxed on the cushions and then at a sudden thought sat erect.

"Hell," he thought, "I can get away! Go to Canada, perhaps. I can start over again and in no time pay back their two thousand dollars."



He shoved his hand down deep into his pocket and pulled out the whole of its contents. Holding up his hand to the street lights as the taxi halted at an intersection, he surveyed his possessions—a half dollar, two dimes, a match, and two bent cigarettes.

"Couldn't get very far on that," he meditated ruefully, "and it is just as well, for they'd get me anyway." A long vista of gray years behind bars unrolled before his eyes. He sank down again on the cushions.

"Here you are, Buddy," the taxi driver aroused him. "Sixty-eight cents."

Lawson dropped the three coins into his hands. "Keep the change," he laughed ironically.

The cab driver was sympathetic, "I know how it is, chum. Keep it if you need it. Pay me later. My name's O'Ryan and I'm number 180C4."

"It's O. K.," Lawson waved him off. "I have a little more and tomorrow is pay-day."

With resolute steps Lawson started down the pier, searching for something heavy as he went. Nearing the end he saw a figure in a slouch hat and a turned up coat collar fingering a piece of rope tied around his waist. Lawson noted with a grim satisfaction that the rope was tied to a burlap sack which appeared to be half-filled with bricks.

"Here, don't do that!" said Lawson catching the man and dragging him up the pier.

"Let me alone!" The man spoke crazily as he jerked his arm roughly, trying to free it from Lawson, who held on with one hand and with the other pulled from his pocket the two cigarettes and the match.

"Here, take this," Lawson said, sticking a cigarette between the man's pale lips. "A good smoke will make things look better."

"What have you got to do with this?" the man asked, turning up a strained white face.

Lawson ignored the question. "Old fellow, it seems that you have been a fool, but things—"

"A lot you know about it!" the man interrupted through cigarette smoke.

"I know—I know," Lawson countered soothingly. "But as I started to say, things are never as bad as they seem. It looks as if you tried to get ahead by using the firm's money and had a stroke of bad luck. How much was it?"

"Nearly two thousand," the man answered hopelessly.

"Pshaw," chided Lawson, "a mere two thousand. Why, a man shouldn't try to drown himself over a bagatelle."



"It might as well be a million when they find it out tomorrow," the man grunted.

"Let them find it out!" Lawson advised.

The man looked up questioningly.

Go to them the first thing in the morning," Lawson continued as he untied the rope from around the man's waist, "and tell them the facts. Tell 'em that you are ready to take your medicine. Let them do what they will. Then there'll be another time. When that time comes, you can go away somewhere and start anew."

"I believe you've got something there." The man spoke eagerly as he ground the cigarette stub under his heel. "Foolish of me, wasn't it? Well, good luck, friend—and thanks." His face was no longer strained, and he wrung Lawson's hand warmly. "I'll be seeing you."

Lawson watched the man until he vanished in the darkness. "Yeah. I'll be seeing you—but where?" he asked softly.

Then smiling sardonically he picked up the bag of bricks, tied the rope around his neck, and strode purposefully towards the end of the pier.

---

## THE DANDELION

by Leona Dishon Douglas

Yesterday . . .

An innocent bud

Bursting forth from nature's protective robes to  
Life.

Today . . .

A golden debutante

Using youth's vitality to generate  
Beauty.

Tomorrow . . .

Old, grey-haired

Crushed by forgetful admirers to  
Death.

## TO KATHLEEN

by Johnny B. Center

I saw thee once again today, Kathleen,  
And I did watch the flowing, golden hair  
Like autumn's foliage, flying in the air,  
And breathed again thy spirit so serene;  
I longed to ask if thou didst love me yet,  
If fate had willed thy glance away from me.  
Ah, dear, if I might yet just prove to thee  
That I do love; if thou wouldst ne'er forget  
My heart aflame with dreams and zealous bliss,  
My arms that held you tightly in the night,  
My eyes that sparkled in the bluest light,  
And, ah, my dearest, ne'er forget my kiss!  
I feared that thou wouldst never answer, "No,"  
And so I passed thee by with head bent low.

---

## AFTERGLOW

by Lucile Nunnelley

As day dies in an afterglow  
of golden skies  
And buries itself in a star—  
sprinkled blue,  
So, I hope, when youth is  
dead in my eyes,  
And the sands of my days are  
filtered through  
I sleep amid an afterglow of  
golden deeds  
And lie beneath a true-blue  
friendship quilt,  
Blessed by a well-spent life  
that needs  
No tokens or flowers that  
Only wilt.

## TWO SONNETS

by George Evans

When all the flesh has rotted from my bones  
And there is nothing left to show for me,  
Of voice to carry my identity;  
No lock of hair, nor half remembered tones  
When all my best is placed beside my worst  
And I achieve a balance in man's mind,  
No longer lauded, neither blessed nor cursed,  
Nor thought of, but forgotten by my kind;  
When no remaining remnant of my pride  
Is left unbarred and stripped of all its worth,  
Naked and natural I'll step aside  
And lose myself and blend again with earth.  
And then, when free at last, of life unbound,  
I'll bless the sweet oblivion I've found.

---

What sort of person am I that I feel  
No pain at this bereavement, no such loss  
As others show; why should not I, too, kneel  
And bow and with my hand describe the cross?  
Is it because I'm hard that I can't pray  
And make the elegy that I should make;  
Can sit the wake without a tear till day?  
Is it because I'm hard my heart won't break?  
If friends who have not known him half so long  
As I are mourning at this friendship ceased,  
Then I, who loved him, surely must be wrong!  
And yet I miss him most who mourns him least!  
I'd always thought I'd weep if he should die.  
Now I but sit, and think, and wonder, "Why?"

---

## HEART-CLEANING

by Genevieve Parris

I cleaned house in my heart today  
And all the rubbish I burned.  
There's no more spite or discontent;  
The hurts I've carefully spurned.

The breaks are now mended with care,  
The pains have been eased with balm,  
There're no more scars, I've erased them all.  
My heart-home is peaceful, calm.

## WILD DUCKS

by Johnny B. Center

The years have flown  
as wild ducks across the southern sky in autumn,  
swiftly, with wild flapping to be forgotten soon;  
I can not remember how many have flown,  
or the odd eccentricities of the flight,  
nor can I guess how many will fly away on the  
morrow  
across the treeline's skyline into nothingness.  
I have been bewildered and fascinated  
beholding these winged creatures,  
each one impressing me greater with its going,  
each one leaving me crying for the future.  
I see a host of others yet to cross  
with beating wings and white against the blue;  
but I choke when I think a chilling wind might  
still  
the gallant creatures, and they should fall lifeless  
before me  
with a shrill, sad cry of defeat!

---

## I AM THE WIND

by Glyn W. Davis

I wait in the shadows  
Under the deep blue sky.  
I move in the darkness  
Under silent clouds that fly—  
I frequent the river  
And move near the shore.  
I laugh at the fisher  
As he toils with his oar—  
I sit on the mountain top  
And talk to the moon.  
I swing in the tree tops  
And sing a soft tune—  
I move on the highways,  
Yet safe from the cars.  
I sit on the house tops  
And wail at the stars—  
I travel everywhere  
To time without end.  
I move forever, for  
I am the wind—!!

## HERE IS A WORKING MAN

by Burgin Benton

Here is a working man whose Union Card  
Says, "Common Labor," in bold, yet  
Shameful type, as if he who stamped  
It there apologizes in this mute way.  
What thinks this man during hours  
When work is done? What could any  
Think whose hands are gnarled by  
Slavish toil? Upon whose legs the  
Varicose veins protest the inhumanity  
And strain it takes to gather crumbs?  
What else to dream of but security  
And warmth and softness of a bed he  
Never shall sleep upon?

What else?

Why, all the world is choked to hold  
His dreams. His dreams of equal justice  
In the share of Distribution's spoil;  
His dreams of shorter hours, of home  
And well-fed chaps, of peace and comfort  
In that day when the veins shall stand  
Out and cry aloud—his dreams—why, he  
Dreams of all the world; he has so  
Little of it.

---

## THE FIGHTIN' IRISH

by Dorothy White

Pat was as Irish an Irishman as ever blinked an eyelid—and that can be really Irish. When we first saw his pert little pug-nose, his sparkling eyes, and his small, wiry body, we screamed, "Pat!", and "Pat" he was from then on. You can always recognize an Irishman.

He wasn't a pretty dog at all, but he was full of fun, and he was afraid of very few things. He'd try to lick anything ten times his size even if the odds were a hundred to one against him. He'd try anything anytime—that is, he would before last summer.

Every time we went camping up the mountain, we vowed and declared that we were going to keep Pat tied. You see, the whole side of the mountain was full of rattlers, and one had got our bird dog the year before. We never tied Pat, though, because he was always so glad to get there. He'd frisk and jump around the deer lick or start off jumping rabbits until we didn't have the heart to stop him.

One day, though, just before a storm, I was perched on the railing of the lodge playing solitaire when I saw Pat at the door. He wasn't jumping and playing that time, though. He was holding his little old head on one side and looking in with such an expression that I could easily see that he was in distress.

I jumped up immediately and let him in, and he whined softly just once, wagged his tail, and lay down. The storm was almost there by that time, and the old pines began to sway and creak. Far away we could hear the rain coming tearing down the valley. The thunder crashed—and that almost finished Patrick. Only the night before there'd been a storm, and he was so afraid that I'd had to hug him close and talk to him all evening.

He didn't seem to be hurt much. There was just one little mark between his eyes. One of them was bleeding, and so I thought he must have run into a stick. I yelled for Unk and he came running out. One look sufficed.

"Snake-bite!" he said. I knew what that meant—oh, how well I knew! We got the first aid kit, a razor blade, some soda water. Old Patty only lay and wagged his tail. We bathed his eye, cut around the wound, and used suction on it. It hurt him—we knew it did—but he was game and so we had to be.

It was then that the worst part came. I thought I'd seen things swell until then. Poor Patty's head was twice its normal size, and he began to whine and gasp for breath. We knew we couldn't take his collar off; that would mean one thing—death—and so we left it on.

The little devil never would give up. All night I sat beside him, listening to his snoring. He'd wake, drink a few drops of milk, wag his tail, and drop off again. I never wanted to hear snoring quite so much as then.

About four o'clock in the morning he began to breathe more easily and from then on he was "out of the woods." Oh, it took days for the swelling to go down, and we were worried many times. The worst was over, though, and game old Patrick lived. The veterinary said it was because we didn't take his collar off; the old "cun'l" said because he was more poisonous than snakes; Unk 'n I just laughed. We knew why he lived. We're surely glad we named him Pat.



## OH CRITIC, HOLD YOUR ACID TONGUE

by George Evans

Oh Critic, hold your acid tongue,  
And Critic, stop your crimson pen!  
What know you of the songs we've sung,  
The thoughts, the moods of other men?  
But if you do not like the way  
We've said the things we have to say,  
Then criticize away at us,  
But don't raise this ungodly fuss!  
And please don't waste the time and ink  
In telling us just what you think,  
But show us some more proper way  
To say the things we have to say!

---

## MOMENTS OF DAWN

by Clyde Lewis

Faded stars peeping  
In amethyst blue;  
Soft winds,  
And perfume from the grass  
Wet with dew.

Slow crimson creeping;  
Mellow new light;  
Warm sun  
Spreading rose pink and gold  
Over night.

Here from the waters of time  
Is a jeweled drop  
Hanging still,  
Hovering over eternity,  
Balanced on a far distant hill;  
A slow drop waiting to fall;  
It cannot—must not—  
But it will.

Just one brief fleeting moment,  
Caught between darkness and dawn;  
So real!  
Just like you . . .

Now it's gone.



## THE WHITE SHIRT

by Virdena Floyd

It was the year 1896. It was spring. Johnnie had just celebrated the happiest birthday of his life in a huge log house of three rooms in the mountains of Kentucky. Gosh! Fifteen years of his life had passed away, and they had been years filled to overflowing with work and play. Johnnie remembered following a plow when he was nine. There had been fishing and swimming in the old pond down in the pasture lot.

"Boy! Ain't life good?" Johnnie said to himself as he lay there, his wide open eyes peering into the darkness. This very day, June 1, 1896, had been the grandest day of all his life. He closed his eyes, and he could see the dinner table—chicken, dumplings, chocolate cake, and more good things to eat. Uncle Harry and his family had come over especially for his birthday. They had all eaten until Johnnie began to wonder if anyone would burst. Johnnie had felt that he loved the whole world and everything in it. When Bessie, the mother of the twin baby lambs, had come to the kitchen door and asked for something to eat, Johnnie had given her a piece of chocolate cake—the best thing on the table.

Johnnie still felt that he loved the whole world. But why shouldn't he? He opened his eyes. His new white shirt! That alone would make him happy. But maybe he had been dreaming. Maybe, after all, he did not really have a white shirt. He pinched himself. It hurt. But he must be sure. He raised himself on an arm; he descended from the bed of feathers. He walked to the line across the corner of the room. On this line were his clothes. There was the white shirt. A white shirt! And tomorrow would be Sunday. He wouldn't have to wait long to wear his white shirt. He wouldn't mind the four-mile walk to the meeting.

At four-thirty he opened his eyes.

"Son!" came the voice of his father. "Up from thar." There was pounding on the door.

"Comin'!" Johnnie, for the second time since retiring, descended from the bed of feathers.

Again he walked to the line across the corner of his room. Again he fondled his white shirt. He took it from the line. He held it up and looked at it until he heard his dad calling the cows.

"Time I'm goin'!" he said as he placed the dear shirt on top of his Sunday overalls.

He put on the faded, patched overalls and brown homespun shirt, and he smiled as he compared the outfit with

his dress clothes.

His big, bare feet went soundlessly into the kitchen. His mother, flour to her elbows, glanced at him fondly.

"Mornin', ma," was his greeting, as he took his milk buckets from the pegs that were above the kitchen table.

"How air ye this har bright Sunday morning?" his mother asked.

"Rarin' to go," her son answered. He laughed uproariously at the goodness of all things and went dashing out to the barn.

"Time ye air a-gittin' har." His dad came down the ladder from the loft, an arm full of hay.

"Let me have that thar hay." Johnnie put his buckets on the ground and took the hay from the arms of his father.

"A right smart boy, ye air," his father said, and Johnnie kicked over a milk bucket just for the fun of it.

He milked with both hands, his bucket between his knees. He sang, keeping time with his hands and feet. The milk slopped over the sides of the bucket, the cow kicked, and his three-legged stool fell over, but Johnnie laughed. He sprawled on the ground. Milk was in his eyes, and the cow's foot just did touch his nose, but his song was not interrupted.

He went whistling to the house. He deposited his three buckets of milk on the back porch and then strained the milk through a snow-white flour sack.

"Look at that thar sun," Johnnie said as he dropped an arm full of wood behind the stove. "Time we air a-startin' to meetin'."

"So 'tis," the mother said as she rushed into the kitchen to black her shoes.

Johnnie stood watching his mother. She put her shoes on the table. She lifted a "cap" from the back of the stove.

"Give me a spoonful of lard," she said as she turned the "cap" upside down.

Johnnie gave her the lard, and she proceeded to black her shoes with the combined ingredients—lard and soot.

Johnnie walked proudly along. Not one of the half dozen boys walking with him had mentioned the white shirt, but Johnnie knew that they had noticed it and envied him. Only one of the other boys had a white shirt. But life was good to Johnnie. She had given him a white shirt.

"Johnnie, thar comes Sallie." All of the boys saw her and called her name. All of them told Johnnie that she was coming.

Last Sunday Johnnie had said something foolish, but today he thrust his chin a little higher and walked on, looking straight ahead. He said nothing at all. Sallie would notice him anyway. He had a new white shirt.

"Wanta ride?" Sallie's father stopped the wagon by pulling both the lines and the rope that extended along the wagon from the brakes.

The boys started climbing in. Johnnie looked up and saw Sallie. She was looking at him with admiration. Or was she? No. It was the shirt. Then her eyes met his and she smiled. Down went his chin.

"Come on, Johnnie. We'll let ye set next to Sallie." The boys were laughing.

Johnnie climbed into the wagon.

"Sech a purty shirt," Sallie whispered.

Johnnie looked down at her sitting there beside him on the board that had been placed across the wagon.

"She is so purty," he said to himself. He glanced at her hands. They were brown hands, roughened by hours of work. He wanted to touch those hands, but he dare not. Then he did the unexpected. He lifted her hand and held it between his own. There was a cough—a cough from her father. Johnnie dropped the hand and stammered "I'm sorry," in answer to the cough. The wagon rolled on.

Johnnie waited for Sallie at the church house door. She had promised Johnnie not to ride home in the wagon but to walk with him.

They walked toward the "shoebench." Sallie sat down on the long wooden bench and put her foot on the lower bench. Johnnie untied her shoes. She removed them and the knitted stockings. She stuffed the stockings deep into the toe of her shoe. She left the shoes there and stood, waiting for Johnnie to fling them across his shoulder as all the other boys did. Then it was that Johnnie hated etiquette. What if the boy should carry his girl friend's shoes home? Weren't they blackened with soot? And if one had a white shirt, how long would it stay that way if soot-blackened shoes were flung across it? Sallie could just carry her own shoes!

Sallie waited. The last couple had just gone. Johnnie looked down the road, and he could see several couples. The boys were tall, wearing blue overalls and white or blue shirts. And across the shoulder of each was a pair of blackened shoes. Johnnie could see that the shirts were becoming black too, and he did not want his shirt black.

"Yo' carry yor own shoes," Johnnie said.

"Carry my own shoes " Sallie had never heard of such a thing.

"Yeah."

"I will not. Yo' will."

"Come on. Get yor shoes." And Johnnie started across the churchyard.

Sallie was furious. She raved. She called Johnnie a lazy, no account, stuck-up fool. But Johnnie walked on. When he reached the road, Sallie picked up her shoes and followed him.

They walked along together, neither saying a word. Together they waded water and plodded through the mud. Why did girls wear shoes anyway? If they walked they had to carry them to and from meetin'. Why wear them? He asked Sallie, but her "Shet up" was so loud that Johnnie "shet up."

Johnnie saw Sallie's mother in the door. It was not until then that he was sorry he had not carried the shoes. He offered to take them, but Sallie made a face at him. Sallie's mother walked into the yard.

"Johnnie Smith," she screamed at him, "that I should live to see the day that yo' would treat my little gal like this!"

Johnnie hung his head. Sallie ran into the house.

"Jes' cause yo' has a new white shirt is no sign that yo' is too good to carry my gal's shoes. You big, lazy bum, yo' cad, yo' doggoned. big-headed ape—!"

She might have gone on thus for hours, but Johnnie cleared his throat and said, "I is not even sorry." He hesitated a moment and then ran.

She stood there with clenched fists. She would get even with that Johnnie Smith. She went into the house to console her daughter by telling her just how badly she had been treated.

Johnnie ran several yards. Then he stopped. He laughed. He went on—whistling. What did he care about girls anyway? He had a new white shirt. He walked briskly on, whistling and singing in turns.

---

## THE CORPSE ON THE BED

by Clyde Lewis

The night after the conference with the labor officials and the directors, G. P. Rawlins found it difficult to sleep. At two o'clock he decided to get up and get some bicarbonate of soda for his indigestion.

He had just snapped on the light and was rubbing his left foot against the calf of his right leg when he saw the corpse in his bed.

The corpse was lying on top of the coverlet. There



was a pair of heavy shoes on its feet, and it was clad in blue overalls that were dirty with coal smut. At the neck was a red handkerchief, and above the neck . . .

G. P. Rawlins stood looking at the corpse, especially at the face. The face was swarthy, caked with cold sweat and dirt, and smeared all over with blood. There was blood congealed in the hollows of the eyes that were shining in the dim light like gray ivory, and there was blood matter in the hair. It was a Pollack's face, stolid, stupid, and bashed in over the right ear so that the skull showed white through the bruised flesh.

G. P. Rawlins didn't know what to make of the thing. He had only seen dead bodies stretched out in funeral parlors. He had never seen a big Pollack fireman whose brains had been beaten out with a billy. After starting to ring for his valet and thinking better of it, he reached out and touched one of the legs. A muscle rolled like rubber under his finger, and he shrank back shivering and blubbering with fear. He looked away from the bed, steeled himself, and turned off the light. Then he snapped it on again. The corpse was still on the bed.

He turned off the light and went out onto his penthouse roof. The night was cold, but the stone railing was even colder to his hands. Down on the street, far below, he could see the lights of automobiles darting like lightning bugs. Directly across from him there was an advertisement in lights showing a beer bottle being poured into a glass. It was late, but there was a party on a roof below him. There was an orchestra, and a girl singer in a blue dress. Her husky voice came floating up to him along with the laughter and the applause.

G. P. Rawlins sniffed and rubbed a hand over the top of his head which was almost bald.

"I was dreaming," he said to himself.

Still, he didn't go back inside. He had to work things out, and the process went something like this:

"I am G. P. Rawlins, this is my apartment...those people down there are a lot of damned fools carrying on like that...But I am dreaming; that couldn't have been real, what I saw is there...things like that don't happen...Now there's that beer ad and here's this cold stone railing...I'm in my night shirt out here, and I'll probably catch cold...Besides I had the door locked, and there couldn't have been a dead man in overalls in my bed...Blood all over!...God! What the hell was it? I must have been dreaming, lots of people do things like that every day...But I'll go back in there and go to sleep...Too

much work and I'm nervous...No use acting like a fool ...Now I'll go on back in there..."

He pulled at his mustache, as he had a habit of doing, and started back toward the door. He walked leaning far back with his stomach sticking out in front of him the way he always walked into the office. Inside, the floor felt warm to his feet. He spent a few seconds groping across the room, feeling his way to the light. He threw the switch and looked resolutely at the bed.

It was empty. The cover was exactly as he had left it. There was no sign of a Pollack with a bashed-in skull.

G. P. Rawlins sighed and sank down on the bed. There was sweat glistening between three hairs that were hanging over his forehead. His shoulders were shaking, his toes were bent tight, and he was patting in erratic rhythm with both feet.

"I need a drink," he said aloud to himself.

He got up, found his slippers, and put on a robe. Then he went to a cabinet and took out the scotch and soda. While he was mixing the drink he didn't look at the bed, but just before raising the glass, he turned and looked again.

The bed was as he had seen it last.

"Imagination," said G. P. Rawlins.

He mixed another drink, took a cigar from the cabinet, and went back out on the roof. The stars were out, and while he lit his cigar and leaned back on the red leather divan, a comet shot across the sky.

That was the first time that G. P. Rawlins had ever noticed a shooting star. And it was the first time that he had sat in the dark by himself to look at the sky and feel the distant sighing of time with the wind. He had never bothered to wonder about anything: he had never had time. Now he was surprised at himself and a little shaken in spite of the fact that the beer bottle was still pouring the electric foam.

While he was sitting there he began to talk to himself.

"Damned funny," he kept saying. "I could even feel the thing. But that shows you. Damned funny though."

Macon was waiting for him when he got to the office next morning. He crushed a cigarette out in the ash tray and jerked his head toward a door.

"Reporters," he said.

"What do they want?"

Macon picked up a newspaper and tossed it on the long black desk. "That guy Savok that one of the cops hit yesterday. He died this morning. This is going to be a pretty nasty mess."

G. P. Rawlins stared at the paper, cleared his throat, passed one hand over his eyes. But the picture was laughing at him. It was the picture of a Pollack, the same one that he had seen on his bed, only now there was no blood or white shining skull.

Macon was looking over his shoulder. "That's Savok," he offered, with a laugh, as if the idea were amusing. "You remember him. Raised a lot of hell in the unions some time ago."

"Yes," he said slowly. "Yes, I remember him now."

"He hated your guts," Macon said.

G. P. Rawlins sat down at his desk. He looked at the wall at a graph of production for the past year, and finally out of the window.

Macon was shoving papers in front of him. "The Governor's sending the militia. They'll be here by one o'clock at the latest."

"Militia?"

"It's this Savok business," said Macon. "They're mad as hell. About five thousand are in the streets around the plant. A lot came in from Saylor and Irvine. We're going to have to protect ourselves."

"They can't do anything with five thousand," said G. P.

"The militia will have tear gas and machine guns," said Macon.

G. P. Rawlins shook his head. "No machine guns."

"Why not? It'll only scare 'em a little. All we have to do is to scare 'em."

"For Christ sake!" yelled Rawlins. "We don't have to turn machine guns on people, do we? No sense in that." He suddenly saw hundreds of them in blue overalls lying on the ground with blood running from little holes in their chests and temples.

"Isler wired already this morning from Washington," said Macon. "Nothing doing. Congress had adjourned."

"Get me Benny on the phone," he told Macon.

He threw the paper in the waste basket, frowned, and snapped a switch on his desk.

"Bring me the record of yesterday's meeting and get rid of those damned reporters."

"Here's Benny," said Macon.

He took the telephone, still frowning. "Listen, Benny, it's all off... Now I know what I'm doing, Benny... You stay in there and feed... This thing is getting big. We can't afford it. You do what I tell you..."

He turned to Macon. "Down six and a half at ten o'clock."

Macon looked worried.



G. P. slammed the phone back on his desk and bit his lip. "We can't pay ten per cent," he said.

"Allison says ten or nothing," said Macon, "He says the men will stay out a year if they have to."

"He'll take five," said G. P.

That afternoon, after three hours of argument, the strike was settled. G. P. Rawlins was photographed shaking hands with Allison, and later getting into his car in a blue overcoat and derby. The evening newspapers carried headlines. The market rallied, and Wroughtright steel jumped four points before the close of the day's business.

G. P. Rawlins had saved five per cent and ended the strike, which meant that production would have to be speeded up and prices would have to be raised. The investors would stay satisfied and the market stable. That night the men went home happy.

But he didn't go back to his house behind the iron fence and the hedge, overlooking the river. He drove through the streets, past candy stores and children playing house ball, to a large frame house set back on a terrace above a stone wall, where there was an iron door for coal to be thrown into the cellar.

He got out of the car, told the chauffeur to wait, and waddled up the steps to the front door of Anton Savok's house. After pushing the bell, he looked straight up at the top of the vestibule, wondering how old the house was, and trying not to look at the wreath hanging over the door bell.

A woman came to the door in a brown dress with a shell clasp in front. She had hair that was turning gray, and a fat face that was red from crying.

"Did you want to look at An?" she asked.

"Yes," he said, "I do."

She let him in and started to take his coat. The house was silent and dark and musty. From somewhere came the sickening odor of flowers.

He stood on one foot and said, "Perhaps you don't know me. I'm G. P. Rawlins."

"He's in here," she said.

They walked across a worn green rug that had brown flowers on it, and she opened a light oak door with a white knob.

"There he is," she said.

He walked up to the coffin. It was silver, lined with some sort of dark red stuff.

There was a big wreath of roses with a card that said, "From the boys." On the floor was a large straw basket

full of yellow flowers, and there were more all over the room. He stood staring at Savok, lying there in a brown worsted suit, white shirt, and brown tie with little red spots. The Pole's face was calm, but there were still the lines about the mouth and eyes, and the skin looked too dark to be clean.

"He's dead," G. P. Rawlins told himself. "Dead. Dead. Dead. He couldn't have been bleeding on my bed last night . . ." He didn't let himself think anymore.

Afterwards, she followed him out of the room.

"An never did say anything about you," she said.

"I am the president of Wroughtright," he told her.

"Oh," she said. "You're Mr. Rawlins." She looked at the floor and began to fool with the clasp on her dress. After a moment she said, "What are you going to do about An, Mr. Rawlins?"

"He was a good man," G. P. Rawlins managed to say. And then he began to tell her how grieved the company was. How grieved were the paper bonds, the ticker tapes, the price lists, and the securities. How grieved were piles of raw ore, the furnaces, the offices, the cranes, and locomotives. Somehow, talking about it made him feel better. He could forget the dead man lying beside him when discussing something clear cut and factual. "Don't you worry," he told her. "Wroughtright will see that you're treated fairly. I'll see to it myself. Meanwhile you receive your husband's regular -salary of—" He stopped and thought. "—a hundred forty-six dollars a month."

He got out of the house as soon as possible. The dark old house, and the flowers, and the cold Pollack lying in a coffin made him feel all hollow.

That night he hadn't been asleep very long when he woke up with his shoulders shaking and his nails clamped tight in his dry palms. At first he couldn't be sure he was awake.

And then he was wide awake. There was something soft and cold against his face. There was a horrible odor of sweat and spoiled meat.

He screamed, and his breath almost choked him. He lay paralyzed, clutching the satin coverlet. For a second he could sense nothing; then there was a clammy flesh against his face; there was an odor, warm and nauseating, like a boiled chicken left on a window sill in the sun, mingled with the stink of a workingman's clothes.

As soon as he could move, he leaped from the bed and turned on the light.

The corpse was in the bed. It was stripped to the waist; there were bloody goggles over its eyes. Again

he could see slick white splinters of skull sticking through congealed blood.

He had been lying next to the thing. His face had been against its neck. Its blood was on his nose!

While he stood there like a stone, barefooted in his nightshirt, he was conscious of more than the corpse on the baby blue coverlet. All at once, from all corners of the room, he saw the men working the cranes, feeding the fires, puddling the steel, and hammering it into rails, machine parts, and boiler plates. He heard the hiss of steel and saw the white hot sparks and the rollers flattening the ingots. He saw backs, arms, and bare shoulders, gleaming with grime-caked sweat. He saw their twisted mouths, their yellowed teeth, their burning eyes. Their voices, mingled in Dutch, Slovene, and oath-choked English, were suddenly very clear and understandable. He heard them say. "Take this Pollack. He is one of us, one of your children. He has spent his life feeding your fires, and now they have smashed his head with a stick loaded with iron. He was yours—your heart and your lungs, your bone and your blood. Now take your Pollack. Take him for the five percent."

"I don't want him," cried G. P. Rawlins. "It wasn't my fault. I tell you it wasn't. Take him back. He's not mine. Take him back . . ."

When his valet found him he was staring at the empty bed, and muttering: "I don't want him. Bury him. I don't want him. He's not mine."

The next day Anton Savok was buried in the rain while the men were back at work again in the mills. But G. P. Rawlins had to be attended by four doctors, who, despite the help of the nurses, could not keep him in bed.

The case of Marie Savok versus Wroughtright Steel was settled in court six months later. She received eight thousand dollars in cash and the payment of her husband's funeral expenses.

And three years later G. P. Rawlins died of pneumonia as a result of exposure. He had escaped from the sanitarium during a snowstorm and attempted to dig a hole with his hands and an empty coffee can.

---

## HE WAS TOO OLD

by Victoria Yates

He was too old!

He sat at his desk where he had sat for the past forty years, but this time with head bowed—a white-haired old man whose head had never bowed to anything before ex-

*Twenty-three*

cept his God. The sun's last shadows of evening were slowly drifting into the room—and the ghosts of his students filed in and took their seats. The room was crowded . . . it was filled to overflowing . . . many could not even get in—his students. Forty years of watching them come and go and return to reach for his hand . . . each year he watched for a few more grey hairs . . . but he always remembered their names . . . children's names . . . Some of them had grandchildren! His first class had taken a few of the chairs—just a few, for there weren't many of them then. There weren't many teachers here then either, or buildings—or much of a town.

As the college grew, so did his classes . . . His classes for the past fifteen years had been so full . . . Why didn't the janitor bring more chairs? . . . Too many were trying to get into the room, too many wispy shadows. There was Jack in his uniform just as he was the last time he saw him before he went across . . . He came to see him and returned a book of poetry . . . but he didn't return. Maybe that was the reason he had flunked Jack's son when he caught him cheating and then had taken him in hand and made a man out of him. One can do so much by teaching good literature . . .

There was Betty . . . He hadn't seen her in years, but she looked as she did the first time he saw her, smiling, gay, not crying her heart out as she was one time when he was walking through the adjoining farm . . . He could see the spot if he would but turn his head . . . but he was afraid that they might go away . . . anyway, she was smiling and gay the last time he saw her; he had seen to that.

He smiled when he saw that big "hulk of humanity," as he used to call him, towering above everyone else in the doorway. He had taught Butch to like good literature, and Butch in return had taught him the fundamentals of football . . . both of them had gained so much. He was the last one to talk to Butch before he died . . . Why, Butch had even sent his mother out of the room so that he could talk to him . . . It was as if he had been his son . . . he'd never had any children . . . he had thousands of them. There were his children . . . all of these waiting for him to start class . . . too old to listen to a failing boy's pitiful tale . . . too old to help the stumbling freshman . . . too old to slip a five dollar bill into some needy student's pocket . . . too old to recite Shakespeare and watch the sophistication leave the youngster's face and read admiration in his eyes.

Jack was coming up to his desk . . . "What's the matter, Jack? Why are you pulling on my sleeve . . . Jack, what is



it that seems to draw us away? The sun is blazing in the window . . . I'm coming . . ."

The head was on the desk...His desk for the past forty years....

---

## THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT A GARDEN

by Willa Bailey

It's funny, the things one remembers out of one's childhood—little intimate, half-forgotten happenings shrouded in violet shadows of forgetfulness. I remember the lily of the valley bed in deep shade in the early morning, the feel of cold wet grass against my bare toes as I wandered out at dawn, the heavenly fragrance of tiny white bells half-hidden in protecting blue-green leaves. I remember a large wild flower of the mallow family brought in from the deep swamp by a busy farmer father; the rose garden, the sweet williams and the sweet peas that bloomed luxuriantly, lovingly tended by a homesick Kentucky woman. There was a grape arbor at one end of the garden, though grapes do not belong to the rich Louisiana soil. In my mother's rose garden was one large pink radiance bush which I claimed as my own. Under it were buried two of the first pets I ever had, a chicken and a tiny baby rabbit.

Always I have loved gardens. They need not be formal gardens. I once loved to ride astride in front of my father to visit the cypress swamp. The sight of Cherokee roses and honeysuckle, magnolia blossoms and honey locusts brings back vivid pictures of long hot days spent on the farm at home. I like people who make gardens, too, and there seems to be a kinship among people who love the soil. The feel of warm moist earth on my fingers brings joy to my heart, and I can not see how anyone can forego this pleasure for the sake of white hands. But then, I can not half *see* a material, a paper, even a painting without touching it. It is because people need to draw strength from the soil, courage to endure in the face of failure that one sees even in the poorest huts a crack filled with violets, a resplendent geranium in a tin can, a neglected petunia, or a tumble-down fence covered with rainbow-hued morning glories.

I have known several lonely people who made their gardens the panacea of their many cares, problems and disappointments. In a garden there is peace. One has the privilege of being alone in his garden, or he may share it with his friends. Christ prayed in the garden. Probably there was no man more sensitive to earthly beauty than He. You can see Him as he fought His own battle there under the dark sky, among the old, old olive trees. They may

have lent Him a little of their strength as any beautiful thing can do. Anyhow, there is a need in each of us for the esthetic. In some it amounts to a painful craving which continues to develop until it fills one's whole being with hunger, or perhaps despair. We may not kill such a desire without killing a necessary part of ourselves. But I've philosophized enough; I must get back to gardens.

A man's garden is one key to his character. One may know, if one knows flowers and men, how each man's flowers grew. One has a gardener, or a flock of gardeners, another a little rented plot of ground, and naturally, their methods are not the same. Sometimes we find only hardy common annuals, and that speaks to the flower lover. He knows that there is limited time for the garden, limited interest, or very limited funds and ingenuity. If we find grounds tended only by professional landscape designers and gardeners who work only because they get paid, the garden may be beautiful, but it will lack soul. Occasionally you find a hidden garden plot containing old-fashioned flowers: lilacs, clove pinks, June and Tiger lilies, "flags," cabbage roses, honeysuckle, sweet marjoram, lemon verbenas. Most of the time, however, a garden like this is only read about in books. If a garden is all hodge-podge, tall flowers, short ones, all of them very carelessly arranged, you know that the gardener is inexperienced or that he is working for a natural appearance, or maybe that he has small children who love to help open the seed packets, or that he is a paid gardener and a novice. A combination of two or more explanations may apply. The selection of the grounds on which the garden lives shows something of the gardener's condition in life. The way the garden is laid out indicates the care given to the planning, arrangement, and the type of taste used in its birth and training. Are there in the garden streams pools, bird baths, fountains, statuary, rock gardens, bird houses, etc.? And do these convenient devices of man and nature clutter and crowd the landscaping, leaving little room for flowers, grass, and the gardener? Now, my reader, have you decided what your gossip garden tells the neighbors? Can it be proud of you, or must it change the subject quickly whenever you are mentioned?

A garden speaks of your temperament, too; it shows the kind of care it has received in the way it responds. Luck with flowers depends upon a person's giving the proper care at the proper time. Greenhouse flowers do not just grow; the caretakers have to be doubly careful of them. Greenhouse flowers are much like precocious children. Oftentimes the beauty and quick growth results in

a very devitalized plant, yet the men who raise them know how to force them just as far as is wise. I delight in roaming through strange grounds at will. I have never been thrown out yet. Maybe I shall be, but I believe that there is that about me which will save me when among strange and irate gardeners which corresponds to the trait which has prevented any dog from biting me, or offering to molest me so far.

---

## PASSING

by Johnny B. Center

Am I the only one that sadly sings  
Above your torn-up mound, your scarred-up grave,  
Upon the sultry air, the smoking, gaseous air,  
Amidst the thunder and the roar of winds,  
The praise of your heroic price—your life—  
And utters curses of those who made you pay  
That price upon this foreign field?  
Was it but twenty years ago that nations met  
And pledged their sacred trusts that ne'er again  
Would brothers grapple in the bloody muck  
On battle fields outstretched beneath the sun  
To satisfy the greeds of petty men,  
Of greedy kings and domineering dreamers;  
That ne'er again would missiles fly and spill  
Against some lonely cemetery wall  
Untimely ends for youths, the sages of the morn;  
That ne'er again would heavens burst asunder  
And cover deep the grass with flakes of ashes;  
That ne'er again would cannon roar and spit  
Its flame upon a healthy, growing race;  
That henceforth men might think and live in peace,  
That industries might flourish, arts increase?

So sleep, my men,  
Deep in your grave of blood and swollen worms,  
Beneath the wailing sounds of men at war,  
Beneath the sod where dictatorial devils  
Salute and stamp the earth, your bloody grave,  
With cloven hoofs all shod with steel!  
Though you be dead, there yet will be  
Ere morn has passed away my company!  
So sleep, my men, the bivouac's yet to come  
When nations all shall learn that war is hell,  
A rotting of flesh, a bleeding of men,  
An all-consuming fire, civilization's end!

I'll join you, men, to feed the starving worms  
When the trumpets blow upon the rasping air,  
And trembling, shaking o'er the top I go.

*Twenty-seven*



## SONG OF SADNESS

by Glyn W. Davis

Brown leaf that fades in fall  
of year . . .  
Sepia messenger of approaching  
snow . . .  
Must you drip down like a  
falling tear?  
Must you float down so quiet  
and slow,  
That none may hear?

Crinkled pattern of Autumn's  
dress . . .  
Brown leaf that fades in fall  
of year . . .  
Must you end your secret  
quest?  
And fall forgotten, like a  
lover's tear,  
That none may hear?

---

## NIGHT DOWN HOME

by Lucile Nunnelley

If you like my land in  
a cool, green coat,  
Trimmed by the shades of  
golden twilight,  
Blessed by the chant of  
lonely frogs  
And the sob of owls in  
the deepening night—  
If grey fog, and blue hills  
tug your soul  
And you love the whispers  
of my creek  
As it runs into the  
blue-gold sky,  
You and I have a  
world to seek.  
The bob white calls; give  
me your hand—  
We can travel this  
Moon-flooded land!